

The ICT startup guide

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Add me and shoot me a dm if you have any questions

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INTRODUCTION

Gonna make this short - my name is Eli, I've been profitable over the last 8-9 months and have been trading ICT for about the last 8-9 months as well(as of november 2023). In total I've been day trading for about a year and a half, and trading in general for about 5 years. I get tons of questions and it feels like I'm always answering the same ones, so I'm going to combine all of my beginner-level knowledge into this guide to share with people. I'm making this guide not knowing how big it could get, so if you paid for this guide, I made it completely free - sorry.

This guide will not be going over any models or any “secret guide” to mastering ICT-meaning this will only be beginner's knowledge to build a base foundation for you to learn and grow yourself.

This guide will contain content on psychology, ICT concepts, and popular mentors that you can learn from as well as resources and mentors that I have personally used.

MOST OF THIS INFORMATION I DID NOT FIND ONLINE!! MOST IF THIS IS THE THINGS THAT I HAD TO LEARN, WISHING I KNEW AS A BEGINNER!

STARTING OUT TRADING - Intro

This will have a lot of beginner info in here, so if you are already a seasoned trader who just needs help with ICT, skip over these pages..

There's a few statements I'm going to start this page off with. First off, most people you see online who are trading are lying to you. They are unprofitable, and buy all their fancy cars and clothes with the money they get from scamming unknowing people. Second off, more money does not equal a better trader. I know hundreds of amazing analysts who don't make a lot of money because of some things I'll cover later in the guide. Third and final statement for this section-your money is valuable. If you have to pay hundreds of dollars for someone's information, chances are it isn't worth it. Tying into that statement is a very important point -

THERE IS NO PERFECT STRATEGY IN THE MARKET!!!!

Anyone who says that they have the best indicator, best setup, best strategy is lying to you. The difference between a good trader and a bad trader is NOT the strategy they use, but instead is how they overcome and control losses. I know hundreds of strategies that work. I also know hundreds of people who can't trade successfully even though they have a good strategy. I will get into that later in the guide.

Moving off from the general statements - let's get into the actual trading.

There are 3 main types of day trading that are used -

- Options trading
- Forex trading
- Futures trading

IN MY OPINION - futures are the best. They offer the simplest risk management and the best and most accurate charts. A lot of beginner traders start with options - please don't. Options are horribly bad for beginners. They move way too fast for a new trader to control and they can lead to your account turning red in a heartbeat. Forex is good. I used to trade forex, but the problem with me is that a lot of forex charts(for the same pair) were different and the method of calculating lot size messed me up often. If you plan on trading ICT, start off with futures.

STARTING OUT TRADING(continued)

IF you took my advice from the last page, you probably want to trade futures. If not, I can still help you understand the other methods.

From here - I will list a bunch of beginner terms that i will be using from here on out:

Long - To place a buy order, anticipating the stock to rise.

Short - To place a sell order, anticipating the stock to fall.

Ticker - A single chart, what you type in to find a chart.

Point - An increment on a futures chart of 1\$

Tick - An increment on a futures chart of 25 cents(.25)

Contract - The system of futures and options trading.

Stop loss - Your system in place for closing a trade in the red.

Take profit - Your system in place for closing a trade in profit.

Most other terms will be explained as they come, but this is about what you need to start.

To trade futures you need 3 platforms - Tradingview(to chart on), and either tradovate or ninjatrade(to place trades through)

To trade forex you need two apps- Tradingview(to chart on), and either metatrader 5 or 4(To place orders on. There's no difference in performance, just UI. I used metatrader5 when i started).

To trade options, you need - to not trade options. Lol.

Futures trading works off a contract-based system. If you enter a long position, it will increase in value by a fixed amount for every point that the ticker moves.

If you want to trade the S&P 500 and the NASDAQ on futures, there are a few things to know.

The only broker for futures in the US is the CME.

The S&P 500 futures ticker is ES. There are numerous different versions of this which i will go over on the next page.

The NASDAQ futures ticker is NQ. Again, there are different versions of this which i will go over on the next page.

STARTING OUT TRADING - Forex

This will be very short and to the point, because i don't trade forex anymore. To trade forex, you need either metatrader 4 or 5, you need either a broker or a funded account firm, and you need a charting platform(tradingview). To place trades, you put in what's called a lot size. The easiest way to find out how to use lot size is to go online and use a lot size calculator.

STARTING OUT TRADING - FUTURES SECTION

There are two forms of futures contracts - Micros, and minis. Micros for ES and NQ move at 1/10 of the speed as the minis. The micro chart tickers for ES/NQ are MES and MNQ.

ES moves 50\$ a point, while MES moves 5\$ a point.

NQ moves 20\$ a point, while MNQ moves 2\$ a point.

Divide each number by 4 and you get the speed per tick.

There are a few different versions of these tickers as well.

For futures tickers, they roll over every 3 months to new contracts. I will explain all the tickers below.

NQ1! - an NQ ticker that auto rolls over every 3 months.

MNQ1! - the same as above, but for micros.

ES1! - an ES ticker that auto rolls over every 3 months.

MES1! - the same as above, but for micros.

NQ1!/ES1! Charts show icons at the bottom on tradingview for the date of the rollover.

The most accurate futures tickers are formatted like this - (M)(ES/NQ)(contract)(year)

So, the micro chart, for ES, during December, during 2023, would be MESZ2023.

ESH2024 - ES ticker for January, February, and March of 2024

MESH2024 - MES ticker for January, February, and March of 2024

ESM2024 - ES ticker for April, May, and June of 2024

MESM2024 - MES ticker for April, May, and June of 2024

ESU2024 - ES ticker for July, August, and September of 2024

MESU2024 - MES ticker for July, August, and September of 2024

ESZ2024 - ES ticker for October, November, and December of 2024

MESZ2024 - MES ticker for October, November, and December of 2024

NQH2024 - NQ ticker for January, February, and March of 2024

MNQH2024 - MNQ ticker for January, February, and March of 2024

NQM2024 - NQ ticker for April, May, and June of 2024

MNQM2024 - MNQ ticker for April, May, and June of 2024

NQU2024 - NQ ticker for July, August, and September of 2024

MNQU2024 - MNQ ticker for July, August, and September of 2024

NQZ2024 - NQ ticker for October, November, and December of 2024

MNQZ2024 - MNQ ticker for October, November, and December of 2024

DO NOT CHART ON MICROS!! THIS WILL MAKE SENSE THE MORE YOU TRADE

POPULAR RESOURCES

Now that you learned about how futures work, I will share with you a bunch of popular names around the ICT community that I personally like, as well as some popular resources to use.

FYI: THESE ARE JUST THE PEOPLE I LEARNED FROM AS WELL AS PEOPLE I RESPECT! Some people you know may not be in here, and that's alright. I probably just don't know them. BUT-I can 100% verify that everyone and everything listed here is legit and trustworthy.

I am not commenting on anyone's community, just the free content available online.

People -

- ICT/the inner circle trader
 @I_Am_The_ICT on twitter
 @innercircletrader on youtube
 - The creator of ICT concepts, the man himself. Albeit dramatic, his trading works.
- TTrades
 @TTrades_edu on both twitter and youtube
 - A very good teacher, he teaches ICT concepts in simple and easy-to-understand ways.
- DodgysDD
 @DodgysDD on youtube and twitter
 - My mentor-he makes price easy to understand and uses a very logical way of seeing price action that opened my eyes.
- Tactical Traders
 @justinwerlein on twitter
 @justinwerlein on youtube
 - Justin is a very good psychology coach and a very good mentor, he helped a lot in the early stages with my emotional issues.
- Casper SMC
 @caspersmc on youtube
 @casper_smc on twitter
 - I don't recommend any of his strategy videos but his psychology videos genuinely changed my trading.

Websites and resources-

- Ictindex.io
 - Search bar with all ICT concepts and includes video timestamps as well.

STAY FAR BACK FROM THESE

There are a few things to avoid in the SMC/ICT community. As I do not care about my reputation, I will not go easy on saying things to stray away from.

TJRTrades- TJR was a great mentor, back when I first started. However, his discord was and still is very childish and he is insanely overpriced relative to his content. I respect him for being the first one to start showing losses and gains and make content free, but his discord server is why he has the money today. It seems very lazy, and it is designed to make you need him instead of pushing you to become a good trader and further your knowledge.

Professionalism - I'm not going to name names since I'm direct friends with these people. There are some servers that are very childish, full of little kids, and albeit extremely racist. If you are in a trading server and it is run unprofessionally, chances are that person is not a professional.

Overpriced discords - Rule of thumb-if it is like 200\$ or more, it's probably not worth the money. Almost all information that ICT traders sell is available online, for free. You just need to know where to look. When you pay for a discord, you should not be paying for the concepts they trade, you should be paying for the market experience that the trader has.

THERE IS NO SECRET ICT OR SMART MONEY STRATEGY THAT IS BETTER THAN THE REST. ANYONE SELLING SOME SECRET INFORMATION IS 99% FULL OF SHIT! MOST PEOPLE SELLING SOMETHING ARE NOT SELLING IT BECAUSE THEY LIKE HELPING PEOPLE!

That's about it. You can make as much money with a simple strategy as someone else who uses a complicated strategy.

PSYCHOLOGY - Overview

THIS WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS ENTIRE GUIDE!!!

This will probably take a good while, so I will start with an overview of what is contained in this section. Your strategy is no different than any other strategy. It just has to work FOR YOU. I know hundreds of people who can point out every single market move, but because their psychology is bad, they cannot make money in the market. I know profitable retail traders who think ICT is fake, and profitable ICT traders who think retail is fake. ICT is amazing. It opened my mind to what the market is and gave me a new understanding. HOWEVER- it is not some secret key to making money. If you believe that ICT will immediately fix your emotional problems-YOU WILL LOSE.

With that above being said, this section of the guide will be divided into multiple sections due to the size and importance of trading psychology.

PSYCHOLOGY - RISK MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

If you already understand stop losses and risk management, skip just this page only.

In trading, there needs to be a set point where you close your position. Whether that be in the red, or the green, your system can only work if you know when to close. This also prevents emotional traders from holding positions too long or closing too early. One of the reasons ICT concepts make this easier is because you close your positions based on what the charts are telling you.

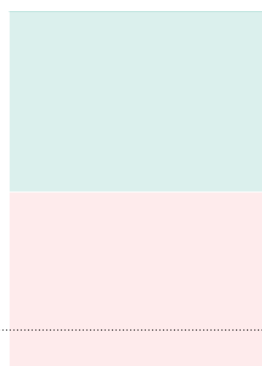
As a beginner, for whatever model you eventually learn, you need to not move your stop or your takeprofit after you place the trade. You also need to close the position as soon as it hits your take profit or your stop.

IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO CLOSE YOUR POSITION AT THE TAKE PROFIT OR THE STOP LOSS, DO NOT LEARN ANYTHING ELSE UNTIL YOU CAN SUCCESSFULLY DO THIS. THIS MEANS DO NOT CLOSE EARLY WHEN YOU'RE IN PROFIT AND DO NOT HOLD THROUGH YOUR STOPLOSS.

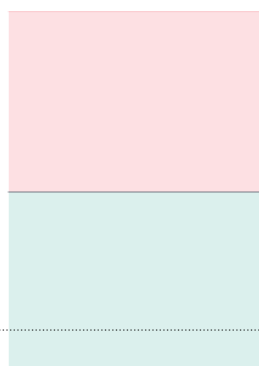
You will not be profitable if you cannot accomplish this. There are multiple factors to consistently making money in the market, but the main one is following your system. If you don't close at your takeprofit or stop loss, you aren't following your system MEANING you don't even have a system.

For a new trader, The way to visualize a take profit and a stop loss is the position box tool on tradingview, with the green box being the profit zone and the red box being the negative zone(or whatever you want to call it, just when ur in the negatives. Lol).

LONG POSITION



SHORT POSITION



PSYCHOLOGY - THE “EVENT”

Every trader I know that is in control of their emotions has had this situation occur.

Something major happens. A switch flips. The brain realizes that it has subconsciously been making you lose. This is what me and my trading friends refer to as “the event” . It doesn't have to happen to everyone, but it has happened to most of the people that I know. For me, it was blowing an entire options account.

For you, you may not even have an event. I hate to say this, but most people who go into the market will not be profitable. I also know friends who haven't had an event, they just never struggled with emotions.

If you think you've had an event, you probably haven't. You will need to KNOW. Your mind will know, and your trading will reflect it.

PSYCHOLOGY - OVERLEVERAGING, OVERTRADING

This is probably a sentence you've said before-

"Why did I do that! That made no sense!"

This is the most important part to learn in trading. The trading journey is not about conquering the markets, it is about conquering yourself. You could be the smartest trader in the world but if you can't control your emotions you will constantly fail.

This can tie into the last page about the event, but until that "switch" flips in your brain you will make the same mistakes over and over. Sometimes it feels like you're watching yourself in 3rd person do stupid shit.

One thing that fixed these issues for me is that I watched someone else do the things that I was doing wrong. My brain realized that what I was doing was stupid. Another thing I did was I challenged myself to not place a single trade for a whole week, while constantly on the charts watching my friends make money. This made me realize that the market will always provide an opportunity and that I needed to learn patience.

Overleveraging comes with the pages before this. If you are overleveraging, you are not following your system. Your system comes with consistency, meaning you consistently follow the same rules set out for yourself. This is the exact same case with overtrading. Overtrading means you are not following your system. If you follow your system and just find a lot of setups, that is not overtrading. Overtrading comes when you start placing random orders to try and make your losses back or try to "get more green".

Again, like with the other psychology pages, you will not find success until you fix these issues. The strategy you use is irrelevant.

PSYCHOLOGY - Consistency

This section is probably the most misunderstood by new traders. Consistency in trading does not mean you need to perform consistently, because obviously every trader has major lows and major highs. Consistency in trading means that you consistently show up for yourself, day after day. You need to consistently be putting in the work, every day, every night, every waking moment until you fully understand what your issues are, as well as fully understanding your model. Speaking of “your model”, it can be anything. There is no perfect model. With that being said, there is also a level of consistency that comes with your learning. Many people will trade and hop around different models/strategies without success-not realizing that their failure comes from their emotions. If you don't stay with a model that you like and understand, you can't master it. Sticking with one model to master at first means you can squeeze as much potential as possible out of it. If you learn a bunch of models and can't master any, you'll just be left with a bunch of models that aren't as good as they could be.

Consistency also comes with another thing that new traders don't understand. Lows will come with trading. A good trader is not one that wins more, it's one that minimizes their losses as well as continuing to trade through streaks of losses. I know many people that think their model “doesn't work anymore” after like 6 straight losses or a few losing weeks. I remember explicitly that TJRtrades lost 6 in a row after his birthday sale in april 2023, but his ability to push through enabled him to recoup those losses.

ICT CONCEPTS AND THEIR BEST TEACHER

This will be a small introduction to this section. In here, I will only be listing as many ICT concepts I can think of, and the creator that teaches them best.

General beginner learning - TJRtrades

Intermediate learning - TTrades, DodgysDD

Mastering - by putting in the work on the charts

Liquidity - DodgysDD

Order Blocks - TTrades

Fair Value Gaps - DodgysDD, Tactical Traders

Orderflow - DodgysDD

MMXM - ICT, Arjo, DanDowdTrading

Emotions - Casper SMC

Entry models - TTrades

Most other people I've found haven't taught the concepts as well as these people.

CHECKLIST

This will probably be the most read page. This is a checklist of how a beginner should go about learning ICT concepts/Smart Money Concepts.

1. [▶ How to Spot Liquidity Sweeps in the Market](#)
2. [▶ How to manage emotions while trading](#)
3. [▶ How to Spot Fair Value Gaps in the Market](#)
4. [▶ How to Read News Data and Apply it to the Market](#)
5. [▶ How to Spot Order Blocks in the Market](#)
6. [▶ ICT Mentorship 2022 Introduction](#) (watch the whole playlist)
7. [▶ The Most Simplified ICT Draw on Liquidity You Will Ever Watch...](#)
8. [▶ How to Trade SMT Divergence \(HUGE PROFITS\)](#) (ignore the clickbait lol)
9. [▶ ICT POWER OF 3 \(SUPER SIMPLE!\) | HOW TO TRADE ICT](#) (clickbait)
10. [▶ You Need to Hear This... \(The Reality of Trading\)](#) BEST VIDEO ON YT
11. [▶ Coming Clean: I Learned this the HARD WAY \(Prop Firm Funded Trader\)](#)

OUTRO

That's it. You have all the information that took me 1.5 years to learn on my own. I want to close with a few statements I may have already mentioned.

This will not come easy. You still need to show up and put in the time on the charts if you want the knowledge and intuition.

Do not compare yourself to others. Your journey is unique and exclusive to you and you only.

The one asset you are in control of is your work ethic.

Good luck. I hope to talk to some of you who read this in the future. My discord is ngeli for anyone who wants to inform me of any successes